

**Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting of the  
Anstruther Improvements Association on  
Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7pm at Dreel Halls,  
Anstruther**

**Present**

**Ordinary Members:** Arran Aird, David Andrews, Kate Anstruther (KA), Bill Bruce, Felicity Chancellor, Jennifer Gordon, Christine Keay, Anne Kirk, Gillian MacLaren, Mary and Trevor Money, Christine Palmer (CP), Elizabeth Riches, Alex Rodger, Viv and James Rough, Alan Stewart, Daryl Wilson.

**Associate Members:** Ronnie Thomson

**Observer:** Christine Wilson

**Apologies:** Chloe Milne, Eleanor Martin, Lavinia and James Kilbride, Margaret McArthur, Mike Barton, Janet Bulloch, Margaret and Tom Kerr, John and Katherine Kellett, Toby Anstruther, Jane Andrews, Elizabeth Gordon, Heather Moffitt

1. CP opened the Annual Members Meeting (AMM), welcomed the members and read the apologies.
2. The minutes of the 2021 AMM were proposed by Jennifer Gordon and seconded by Elizabeth Riches. There were no corrections or matters arising.
3. CP presented the President's Report (see below).
4. CP outlined the Committee's proposal that the annual subscription for September 2023 to August 2024 should be set at £10. The proposal was approved by the ordinary members unanimously.
5. The constitution requires that one-third of the Trustees retire each year and two of the existing Trustees had resigned in writing and were putting themselves forward for re-election. They had completed and submitted nomination forms within the deadline laid out in the constitution. Both nominees were voted in unanimously as Trustees by the ordinary members present at the AMM. They are: Christine Palmer and Elizabeth Riches. No other nomination forms had been received.
6. CP presented the independent financial examiner's report to the members.
7. As Joint Treasurer, KA presented the annual accounts to the members, who received them. KA provided a headline summary of the income and expenditure for 2021 and CP invited questions from the members. There were no questions from the members.
8. The AIA Committee proposed that Mark Robertson of Henderson Black be appointed as independent financial examiner for the SCIO's accounts and this was approved unanimously by the ordinary members.

9. CP made a call for any other competent business, but there was none.
10. CP thanked the Trustees, the Honorary Patrons, the members, the volunteers and anyone who had attended AIA events for their work and support over the previous year, before closing the meeting.

**Above minutes accepted as a true record**

Signed: GP Palmer (Chair)      Date: 19/10/2023

## President's Report

We began 2021 back in lockdown, with the capital project still incomplete but the excitement and novelty of our first member of staff joining the AIA team. Julia Priestley took up her post as the AIA's first Community Development Worker on 4th January and has brought about a step-change to the organisation. Under her skilful and calm guidance, the Anster Community Development Plan was formed, with four key aims to guide the project:

- People feel more connected to their community and to each other
- People feel supported to take action and make things happen
- People have more opportunities for volunteering and feel supported to do so
- People improve their quality of life therefore experience greater wellbeing.

Despite another year of restrictions and curtailment, Julia has managed to achieve a great deal in her first year.

The season of Anster Nichts In ran its course on Zoom, with folk continuing to check in from far and wide. By September we were able to start a new season back in Dreel Halls, with social distancing measures in place. It was wonderful to be able to welcome our members and guests back in person.

When it became clear that the Duck Race would be on hold for a second year, Julia and the Committee created a range of duck race activities for families in Anstruther. Local writer, Steve Blair, generously created a themed edition of his East Neuk Pirate Series stories, Pirate Bertie and the Great Anstruther Duck Hunt, which was recorded and shared online. With the help of local residents and businesses, the team also created a duck hunt walking trail, allowing local families to follow Pirate Bertie's map through the village to locate 10 missing ducks, in the safety of their family bubble. A Design a Duck colouring competition for children and adults was hugely popular, with local businesses distributing the colouring sheets, and prizes donated by Anstruther Co-Op. Competitors were encouraged to display their entry in their window, and these made a bright and hopeful sight, cheering up locals on their daily walk.

Not long after she had started, Julia became aware of the lack of provision during lockdown for first-time parents or carers. She set up Dreel Babies, initially an online group for local people in this position. This group has grown and changed throughout the year, meeting in person when able, first outdoors and then inside Dreel Halls, and now including toddlers as well as babies. The group meets weekly, providing an opportunity to socialise, with music and literacy activities for early years.

In May, keeping everything crossed for dry weather, we carried out the long-awaited external redecoration of Dreel Halls. We are grateful to Keim Mineral Paint, John Smart & Son and Jim Neville Painters & Decorators, who delivered the project on time and within budget with minimal traffic disruption.

One of our great joys was welcoming back our members to a coffee morning in July, providing a safe and socially distanced way to re-engage with old friends and a chance to see the new spaces in Dreel Halls. After the success of this event, Julia helped us get back up and running with our intergenerational community cafe, now called Dreel Friends. Meeting at Dreel Halls on the third

Saturday of the month, this relaxed and fun get-together includes a book swap, stories for younger children and a seasonal craft table. That's in addition to the usual fantastic home-baking and hot drinks.

One of our earliest events in the re-opened Dreel Halls was a partnership film screening in July with the East Neuk Festival (ENF), when we hosted *The Big Picture: A Day in the East Neuk*. Julia supported local ENF Arts Activist, David Behrens, to engage the community in capturing the sights and sounds of the area. This has been followed by a range of activities at Dreel Halls focusing on sustainability, in the year that Scotland hosted COP26. These include: a circular economy workshop as part of the East Neuk Summer Activities programme, a beach clean with Plastic Free Anstruther, a Bioblitz event on the Dreel Burn with the Scottish Fisheries Museum, and a climate conversation and film screening with Transition St Andrews as part of Anster Cinema.

Julia has worked closely with a number of local projects to support their growth and development. These include Anstruther Skatepark Group, made up of enthusiastic local young people who dream of a skatepark in Anstruther; Dreelside Park Upgrade; Dreelside Woods, a group hoping to complete the community asset transfer of the woods; and The Conversation Cafe, a monthly, themed discussion group. It is fantastic that the AIA now has two amazing resources to offer to these initiatives - we can provide the beautiful space of the redeveloped Dreel Halls for meetings and fundraising events, and Julia's experience and expertise in community development.

Autumn saw a new confidence as we returned to in person Anster Nights and relaunched Anster Cinema. In September Dreel Halls' doors were opened wide to allow visitors to take in the view from the tower and enjoy an exhibition provided by Kilrenny & Anstruther Burgh Collection, as part of Doors Open Day. We also took part in the Family Learning Roadshow outdoors at Cambo, providing families with an Autumn-themed, print-making workshop on a fresh October's day. In November our team of volunteer bakers got busy with the apple harvest and produced apple crumbles in all shapes and sizes which went on sale at Bowhouse Food Market, providing a great opportunity for raising funds and engaging with visitors to the market. Our Christmas Social and festive screening of *Edward Scissorhands* were the last AIA events of the year, coming just before the Omicron variant of Covid began to take a hold.

The AIA garden has continued to keep our volunteer gardeners busy. It can be hard work, but the kind comments we receive from passers-by while we work make it all worthwhile. Trustee, Jen Gordon, has done a lovely job of curating our new, seasonal, kitchen window display, which also attracts many positive comments and much attention from passers-by. The AIA is able to offer many opportunities to volunteer, from catering to story-telling, from building maintenance to fishing ducks out of the Dreel Burn. We are always looking for more people to get involved, and Julia is developing a more structured programme for anyone who is interested.

Dreel Halls is now fully open for business and in 2021 we were able to welcome back our regular hall users, like the Pilates group and the Young Quines drama group. Our beautiful halls are available for private hire and we hope our community

will make good use of them for regular activities and one-off events and celebrations. Our favourite comment from a member of the community in 2021 remains: "I've been out walking after it gets dark lately and when I go past Dreel Halls the lights are always on, it's great to see there's a lot happening there now".

In 2021 we received financial and in-kind support from, among others, the National Lottery Community Fund, Fife LEADER (The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, Fife Historic Buildings Trust, TREC GB, Fagus Anstruther Memorial Trust, James Aird & Sons, Balcaskie Estate, Amazon Smile, Bowhouse Food Market, Anstruther Co-op, Colm O'Liathain, Greener Kirkcaldy and Fife Council.